The Cleveland Museum of Art Takes Ownership of Transformer Station, Opens Immersive Art Experience in Ohio City's Hingetown Neighborhood, Announces City Stages Concert Series

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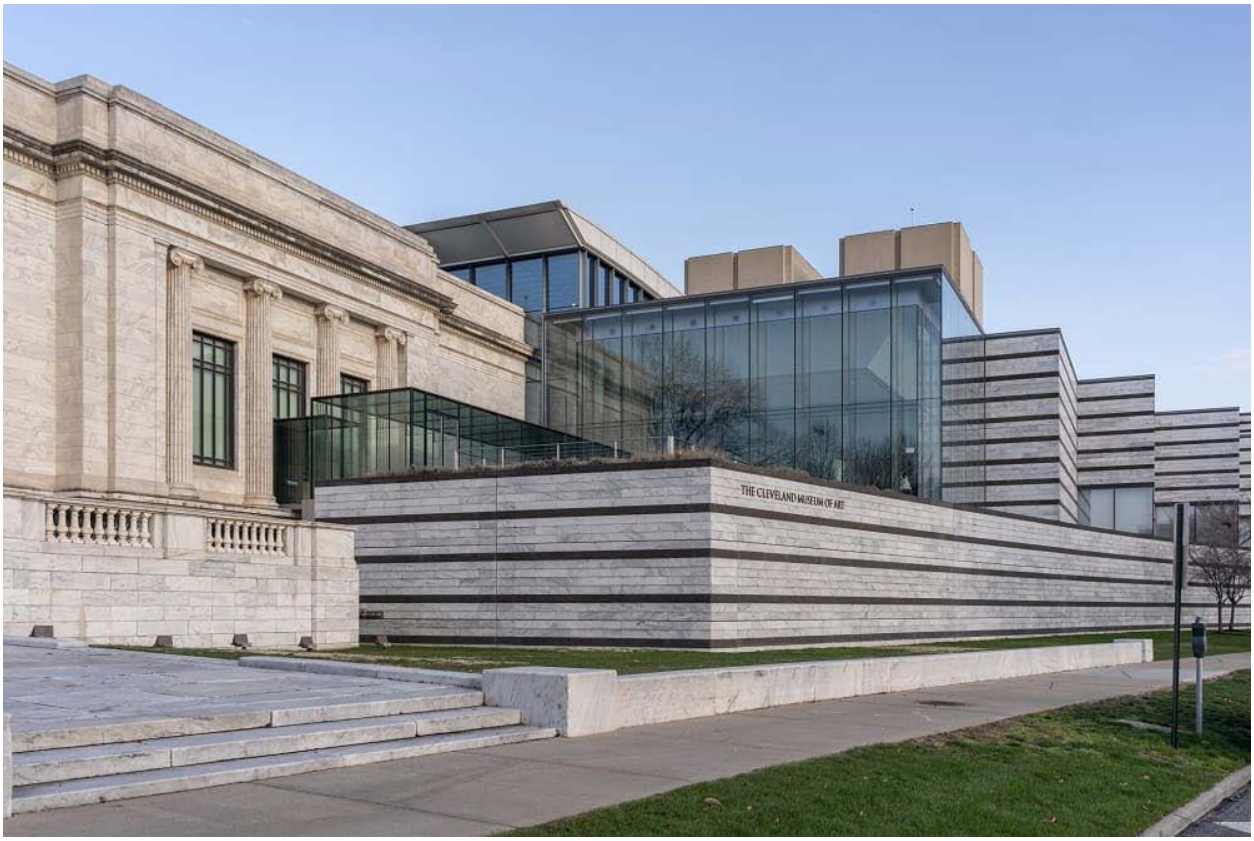

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Cleveland (June 29, 2023)—The Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) announces it will assume ownership, management, and daily operations of Transformer Station starting in July. Founded in 2011 by philanthropists and art collectors Fred and Laura Bidwell, Transformer Station opened in 2013 and has hosted special exhibitions, programs, and events in partnership with the CMA over the past decade.

Under the CMA, Transformer Station will be a vibrant center for the visual and performing arts, where the CMA will present the work of emerging artists, time-based media, live music, and dynamic social experiences in Ohio City's Hingetown neighborhood.

"The CMA is grateful to Fred and Laura for their collaboration, great generosity, and remarkable vision for Transformer Station," said William Griswold, director and president of CMA. "Throughout our partnership, the combined work of the museum and the Bidwells has created opportunities for the community to engage with the arts in new and inventive ways."

New Immersive Exhibition Opening on July 14, 2023

The CMA's inaugural exhibition as owners of the space will be *Blow*, a time-based exhibition by Japanese artist Tabaimo (b. 1975), which fuses traditional Japanese art forms with contemporary digital animation. This is the first time the work, on display at

Transformer Station through October 8, 2023, will be on view since its acquisition by the CMA in 2012.

The open-ended, fragmentary nature of *Blow* is intentional, as the artist often draws from personal experiences and emotions. Throughout the five-minute looped digital animation, bubbles, body parts, and various plants float through space. The accompanying audio, which mimics the dripping and rushing of water, is an acoustic collage of digitally invented sounds.

Blow is the installation work that started Tabaimo's *flow-wer* series of drawings. "I am still drawing the flow-wer series intermittently, and each time I draw, I am reminded of this work," Tabaimo said. "I am very much looking forward to *Blow*, which will stand in reality for the first time in nine years."

Concurrently on view in Transformer Station's Crane Gallery will be another work by Tabaimo, *The Obscuring Moon* (2016), which draws on a print by Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858), taking it to animated, fantastical ends.

Transformer Station

Since the Bidwells opened Transformer Station, the CMA has partnered with them to expand the museum's programming and exhibitions outside its University Circle campus. The CMA has curated critically acclaimed exhibitions at the venue, including *New Histories, New Futures* and *Laura Owens: Rerun*, which displayed the work of local and national artists at various stages of their careers. Transformer Station was also the first place in the US to show work by now-recognized artists Raúl de Nieves and Annika Yi.

"We are excited to see the next chapter of Transformer Station unfold under the artistic and operational leadership of the Cleveland Museum of Art," said Fred Bidwell. "In 10 short years, this venture has exceeded our expectations as a platform for artists and reaching new audiences."

The Fred and Laura Ruth Bidwell Foundation promised the facility and property as a gift to the CMA shortly after it was founded in 2011. This gift was originally intended to take place in December 2026, but given the ongoing and successful working relationship, the transfer was expedited to take place this year.

"It has been our privilege and pleasure to share works from our collection and commission exhibitions that have empowered the ideas of scores of artists and provided an essential platform for the growth of their practice," said Laura Bidwell. "We know that the Cleveland Museum of Art will continue to make Transformer Station a place where artists and art lovers can share innovative ideas and celebrate creativity long into the future."

In this next chapter, Transformer Station will serve as a near west side satellite location for CMA exhibitions and programs, offering distinctive and engaging contemporary art installations, musical and other performances, and a range of programs. The CMA's goal for Transformer Station is to reach an even larger, younger, and more diverse audience, doubling down on its mission to provide transformative experiences through art, for the benefit of all the people, forever.

Transformer Station will also help fulfill the CMA's promise to serve as a social and intellectual hub, providing a venue for experimentation in a manner that is most impactful for the community, while complementing the CMA's work with families at its Community Arts Center (CAC) in the nearby Clark-Fulton neighborhood.

Blow is a presentation of the Cleveland Museum of Art at Transformer Station. All exhibitions organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art are underwritten by the CMA Fund for Exhibitions. Principal annual support is provided by Michael Frank and the late Pat Snyder, the John and Jeanette Walton Exhibition Fund, and the late Roy L. Williams. Generous annual support is provided by an anonymous supporter, the late Dick Blum and Harriet Warm, Gary and Katy Brahler, Cynthia and Dale Brogan, Dr. Ben and Julia Brouhard, Brenda and Marshall Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Walter R. Chapman Jr., Richard and Dian Disantis, the Jeffery Wallace Ellis Trust in memory of Lloyd H. Ellis Jr., Leigh and Andy Fabens, the Frankino-Dodero Family Fund for Exhibitions Endowment, Janice Hammond and Edward Hemmelgarn, Carl T. Jagatich, Cathy Lincoln, Eva and Rudolf Linnebach, William S. and Margaret F. Lipscomb, Bill and Joyce Litzler, Carl and Lu Anne Morrison, Jeffrey Mostade and Eric Nilson and Varun Shetty, Tim O'Brien and Breck Platner, William J. and Katherine T. O'Neill, Betty T. and David M. Schneider, the Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation, Margaret and Loyal Wilson, and the Womens Council of the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The CMA will open Transformer Station with the two new exhibitions by Tabaimo and with the return of the City Stages outdoor concert series:

2023 City Stages Performances

City Stages, the museum's acclaimed free outdoor summer concert series featuring the best in global music, returns to Hingetown. These block parties will take place in front of Transformer Station on consecutive Wednesdays, July 19 and 26, at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, July 19

Meridian Brothers is a five-piece Colombian band focused on reinterpreting Latin tropical styles with a psychedelic and experimental sensibility that retains the sense of fun and celebration essential to the music. The group's music uses popular Latin American

rhythms augmented by sampling techniques, elaborate effect processing, and Eblis Álvarez's quirky and theatrical vocals, which channel imaginary characters with both pathos and humor.

Wednesday, July 26

Battle of Santiago, based in Toronto, creates a unique sound by combining classic Afro-Cuban rhythms and vocals with a distinctly Canadian art-rock spirit and sensibility, subtle electronica, and rumbas.

Arrive early and grab dinner and a drink at one of Ohio City's bars or restaurants or visit one of the local shops. Seating is limited—bring camp chairs and enjoy an evening of music and dancing in the street.

Parking is available in the Lutheran Hospital parking lot located at West 28th Street and Franklin Boulevard. FREE to all.

Transformer Station is located at 1460 West 29th Street (at the corner of Church Avenue), Cleveland, OH 44113. Normal hours are Wednesday through Saturday, noon to 7:00 p.m. Transformer Station will remain open until 9:00 p.m. during City Stages.